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ABSTRACT

The current status of the University of Kentucky freshman experience was examined in a comprehensive study as a basis for determining needed action. The study commission consisted of 59 representative students, faculty, and staff whose work was divided among four task groups: (1) Student Recruitment and Pre-Admissions Contact; (2) Summer Advising Conference and Other Orientation Programs; (3) Academic Offerings and Instruction; and (4) Campus Climate. Proposals for action are made regarding: preadmission information and student recruitment; the advising conferences; academic advising and information services; academic programs and course content; residential life; cultural enrichment and recreational programming; research on freshmen; and coordination and oversight responsibilities. (LBH)

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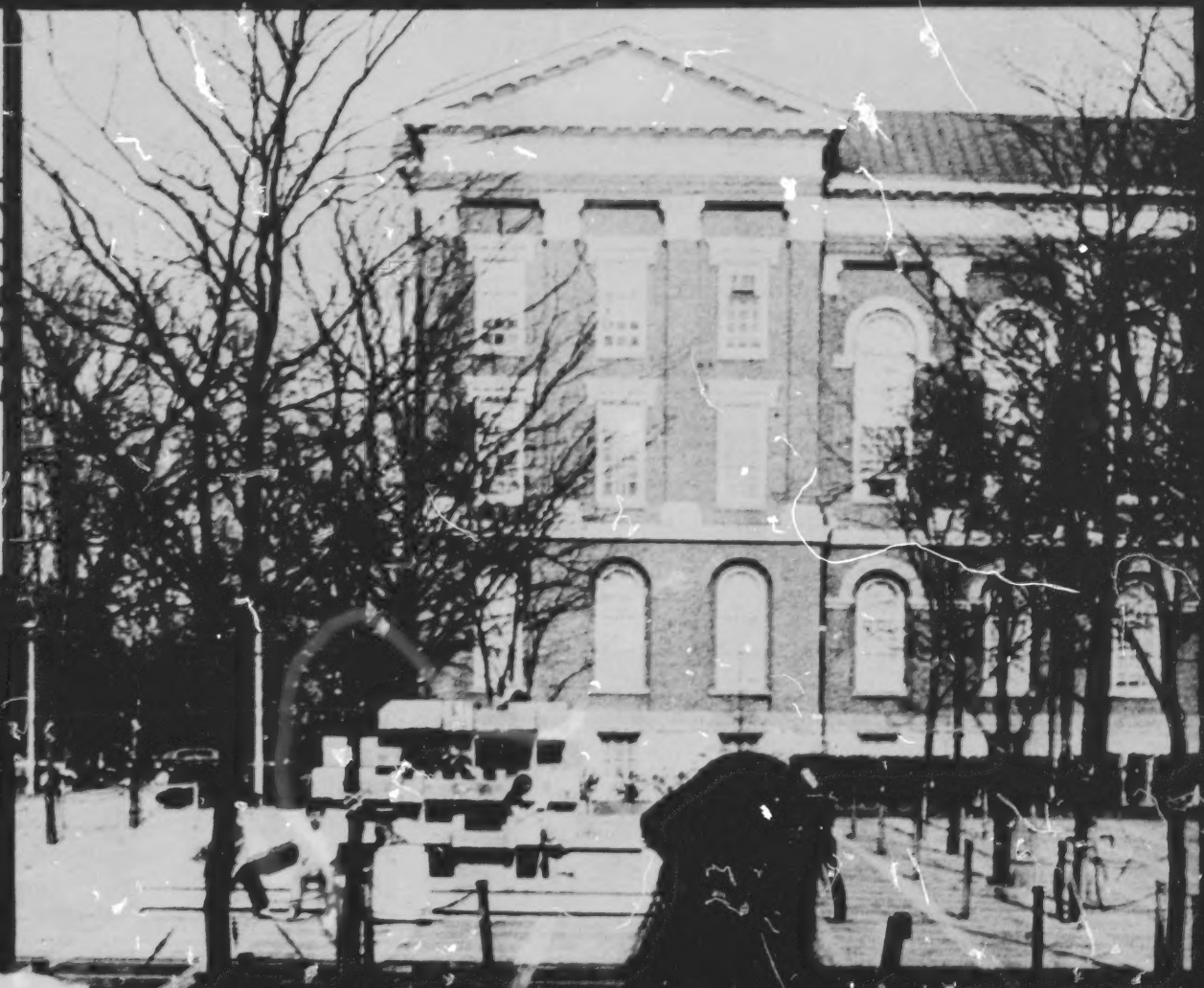

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UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

JULY 1976

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REPORT OF THE

JOINT VICE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION

ON THE

FRESHMAN YEAR

Commissioned by the

Vice President for Academic Affairs
and
Vice President for Student Affairs

University of Kentucky
August, 1976

"The first step toward Justice for Freshmen is a new attitude toward freshmen, an attitude which sees in each entrant a unique individual worthy of the best the institution has."

---Theodore Marchese, 1971

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* Not all copies of this report contain the appendices. Copies of the appendices are available in the Office of the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

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Stephen Langston
John Stephenson
David Stockham
Roger Anderson
William McCrary
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P R E F A C E

In view of the critical importance of the freshman year in the lives of students and the fact that freshman concerns are easily ignored in a growing and complex university like ours, and because of the lack of systematic study in recent years of the experience of freshmen at the University of Kentucky, the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs agreed that it would be timely and productive to initiate jointly a comprehensive study of the current status of the UK freshman experience as a basis for determining needed action.

Accordingly, on January 17, 1975 we appointed a Joint Vice Presidential Advisory Commission on the Freshman Year. Our memorandum of that date and the accompanying charges to the constituent task groups appear in Appendix A of this report. The Commission consisted of representative students, faculty, and staff - 59 persons in all. The Commission's work was carried out first by four task groups and then by a steering committee. The work was divided among the task groups as follows:

Task Group A: Student Recruitment and Pre-Admissions Contact

Task Group B: Summer Advising Conference and Other Orientation Programs

Task Group C: Academic Offerings and Instruction

Task Group D: Campus Climate

A fifth task group, on academic support services, had initially been planned but was not activated because of activity and planning through other channels. Subsequently, the reorganization of the College of Arts and Sciences (including the new Division of Basic Studies) and the inauguration of the Developmental Studies Program have significantly strengthened the academic support services for UK freshmen.

During the spring semester of 1975 the task groups worked intensively and met frequently; and in May each group submitted a report of its findings and recommendations. (The full reports appear in Appendices B through E of this report.) The recommendations included 69 items of proposed study and/or action.

The Steering Committee then proceeded to analyze the four reports, and it soon became apparent that the committee would have to undertake certain additional tasks as bases for drafting a comprehensive report for the entire Commission. More specifically, the Steering Committee: drafted a statement of over-arching goals for the freshman year; drafted statements of objectives sector by sector (e.g., for orientation, for the academic program, etc.); conferred with concerned faculty, staff, and freshman students regarding specific aspects of the Commission's work; and critically analyzed and prioritized all of the recommendations of the task groups with respect to both desirability and feasibility.

We hold no brief for the imperfectibility or omniscience of this document. It suffers from clear limitations, including heavy time pressures on busy people. Furthermore, in the absence of hard data, we have sometimes done a good deal of armchair evaluation. Despite such limitations, however, we believe this report can serve several useful purposes for the University community. It can: a)inform us of the current status of certain aspects of the freshman experience at UK, both positive and negative; b)point to certain clearly-needed actions in specific areas; c)provide us with some perspective by suggesting comprehensive goals and specific objectives; and d)remind us of the need for continuing attention to the quality of the freshman experience - in the form of ongoing study, discussion, and action.

We acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of the 59 persons who served on the Commission. A number of them undertook special, time-consuming assignments beyond attendance at meetings. Indeed, we are profoundly impressed by the spirit that has prevailed throughout the Commission's work - an indication that studying and improving the quality of the freshman experience at UK is perceived by many to be a vital and important task.

In addition, we received invaluable information and insights from non-members of the Commission - faculty members heavily involved in teaching freshman-level courses, administrative staff responsible for certain services to freshmen, and a select group

of freshman students.

Finally, we wish to single out for special appreciation the following persons who provided noteworthy leadership and contributed a great deal of time and effort to this entire project:

Dr. Roger B. Anderson, Chairman, Task Group A
Dr. William C. McCrary, Chairman, Task Group B
Dr. Raymond F. Betts, Chairman, Task Group C
Dr. Robert J. Wills, Chairman, Task Group D
Dr. Stephen L. Langston, Member, Steering Committee
Dr. John B. Stephenson, Member, Steering Committee
Dr. David H. Stockham, Member, Steering Committee

Respectfully,

Lewis W. Cochran
Vice Pres. for Academic Affairs
and Co-chairman of the Commission

Robert G. Zumwinkle
Vice Pres. for Student Affairs
and Co-chairman of the Commission

Chapter I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FRESHMAN YEAR

The work of the Freshman Year Commission has been prededicated on these assumptions:

-- that the freshman year is critical

-- that the University should be a unique place of learning

-- that the freshman year should be used to clarify important life goals and intermediate educational goals and to advance toward their attainment

-- that the University and individual students often succeed but sometimes fail in maximizing such goal attainment

-- that the resources exist for changes which would increase the likelihood of attaining desired outcomes

-- that these desired outcomes are widely known and shared, even if they do not occupy the forefronts of our consciousness

-- that by reminding ourselves of these desired goals for freshmen and by using them for guidance, we can reorient many programs so that freshman year experiences are enhanced

The freshman year is critical because it represents an important point of embarkation, a period of openness to new experience and reorientation, a moment of potential dedication to fresh goals and points of view, a time of preparation

for an intense period of intellectual growth and full maturation into personhood. It is a time when thousands of young persons cross the threshhold into university life, persons who represent the human capital to be invested in their and our tomorrows, persons who, whatever their motivations and purposes, arrive with expectations of challenge, of differentness, of humaneness, of excellence. Here is the opportunity for reassessment, for strengthening, for beginning serious life-planning. This is the time for exploration, skill-building, sight-setting, reaching for that stable balance between dependence and independence. It is the time for putting first things first.

Or it is the time for none of these. It can be the time of following whim and fad and printed directions. It can be the time of drawing false conclusions because of unexamined certainties about truth, self, and the future. It can be the time of getting by with undeveloped skills, of continuing school with grade thirteen. It can be a time when being oneself means simply continuing to be only what one was always expected to be. The consequence in this case is the postponement of the freshman year until the sophomore year, or later, or never.

Whether the full potential of the freshman year is realized must be a responsibility shared between the University and the

individual student. In many respects, attitudes toward intellectual pursuits and the student's relationship to them are shaped by the way the student first meets them. At the very least if we expect students to respond positively to the important challenges of the freshman year we must behave as if we too consider them important.

More to the point, our programs should be structured so that the freshman experience is in fact a time of challenge and excitement as the student explores intellectual and cultural areas which are new. Further, the student should feel the tug of conflicting ideas and have old ideals challenged by active interchange with the faculty.

The freshman year is critical because later experience depends on earlier; if the most is not made of this time, then less return can be anticipated later. Higher education, or any education, should be viewed as a front-end loaded investment: if the effort, energy, and resources are not applied in the beginning, then little return can be anticipated later. Planning and work skills may be undeveloped, communication abilities may be stunted, and the important may remain undistinguished from the unimportant. The self may remain largely undiscovered, values unexamined, lifeways and goals unexplored.

The University often succeeds but sometimes fails to maximize its impact on freshmen because it has not always recognized the uniqueness and importance of it as a totality of experiences. While many programs, offices, and staff are devoted to serving the needs of freshmen, and while others serve freshmen as one of several clientele groups, the University has never attempted to design and coordinate a comprehensive set of experiences with the needs, backgrounds, and potentials of this unique group in mind. The freshman year, and those activities preliminary to it, have never been viewed as an integrated whole with distinct objectives which, if achieved, would lead to a much more valuable career of learning, not only for the collegiate years immediately ahead, but indeed, for a lifetime.

It is believed that the organizational, human, and financial resources required for a redesigned, better coordinated, and more effective set of freshman year experiences are available in this university. A systematic review of program elements, conducted with desired freshman year outcomes in mind, should reveal needed changes in and among programs, facilities, and services which would result in increasing the likelihood of achieving these outcomes.

The kinds of outcomes we desire as a result of freshman year experiences are widely known and shared, even if they

are expressed in different ways, and even if it is true that we do not often give them conscious thought. The definition of the freshman year proposed by the Commission's Task Group on Academic Offerings is a general statement of this shared concern:

> The uniqueness of the freshman year as a university experience is found in the anticipated transition which the student should undergo from intellectual dependence to intellectual autonomy, and from social dependence to social responsibility. By the end of the freshman year the student should both be able to define intellectual problems and appreciate their significance to him and to the society in which he lives.
>
> To this end the academic program of the freshman year should be designed to answer Montaigne's question, "What do I know?" and to respond to the Socratic admonition, "Know thyself." Such a program must be flexible enough to accommodate differing student talents and needs, varied enough to arouse a sense of intellectual curiosity, rigorous enough to develop in the student the ability to make independent judgments supported by considered research and thought.

In most ways what we desire for freshmen are the same things we hope will take place among all students. Nevertheless, there are some desiderata of a university education which should be considered logically and temporally prior to others. Moreover, whatever we wish as outcomes of the <u>total</u> university education, we should hope to see signs of substantial progress toward them by the end of the freshman year. We suggest the

following as a suitable statement of comprehensive goals for the freshman year:

1. To acquire knowledge and understanding.
2. To sharpen analytic and inductive reasoning skills.
3. To learn to write and speak more clearly and precisely and to read and listen more effectively.
4. To increase self-knowledge and self-direction.
5. To make progress in educational, career, and life planning.
6. To achieve greater tolerance - of self, of other people and cultures, of novel ideas, and of the inherently ambiguous.
7. To improve interpersonal skills as well as those skills required to live in and master human organizations.
8. To increase understanding and acceptance of civic and social responsibilities.
9. To develop or reaffirm personal values.
10. To expand one's capability for creativity and creative expression as well as for aesthetic appreciation.
11. To increase the capacity and desire for a lifetime of self-initiated learning.

With these goals in mind, the Commission on the Freshman Year feels it is useful to review and reorient many programs in the University in a beginning effort purposefully to achieve

greater effectiveness of the freshman experience. Of course, the degree to which the recommendations reported in the remainder of this document become understood and implemented rests on the willingness of all involved to read, reflect, and recommit themselves to the importance of appropriate goals for the freshman year.

Chapter II. OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENTS OF CURRENT PROGRAMS

The objectives for each of the program areas considered by the Commission are presented in this chapter. In addition, the Commission has attempted to make some assessment of overall performance as measured against these statements of objectives. In most instances, the assessments are based upon the experience of task group members, the steering committee, and interviews held with representatives of various units with program responsibilities. As a result, the evaluations contained herein are for the most part subjective judgments or statements of perceived fact.

Part A. Recruitment, Admissions, Orientation, and Advising

1. Objectives

Recruitment and Admissions: The admissions process begins with the prospective student's initial contact with the University and continues through the time he has actually enrolled in a set of courses for his first semester. For this reason, it is not possible to

separate completely student recruitment from the process of admission; furthermore, it is evident that many of the ideas a student has about the University are formed during this period. For this reason, it is important that many of the functions of formal orientation and advising programs be initiated during this time. These views are expressed in the objectives below:

1. To communicate to prospective students and their parents general knowledge of the higher education opportunities available at the University of Kentucky.

2. To reach all segments of the state's population (racial and ethnic groups, ability levels, income levels, geographic areas) with information about educational opportunities at the state's major university.

3. To communicate to special groups of prospective students information concerning programs of special interest to them. (Included, for example, would be racial minorities, handicapped persons, academically disadvantaged persons, older persons, persons of superior ability, etc.)

4. To inform prospective students in specific terms of the steps required to

be admitted to the University, to secure housing, and to apply for financial aid.

5. To achieve admission to the University, assignment of residence hall space, and determination of eligibility for financial aid without unnecessary expenditures of time and energy by students.

6. To provide information to students concerning chosen fields of study, as well as guides for academic planning so that this process may begin as early as possible.

7. To provide students with information about special support services which they may need or desire.

8. To provide information relative to extracurricular activities and special programs of interest to students.

Orientation: A narrow view of orientation is that it is a formal program introducing new students to the University. A broader view recognizes that newly admitted students have already formed opinions and prejudices about the University and that this is a continuing process. Cognizant of this fact, what is stressed here is the importance of conveying a positive

view of the University as a place of learning and intellectual excitement. A formal orientation program must provide opportunities for students to increase their appreciation of the University as a center of learning, maturation, and intellectual adventure. Thus, objectives for orientation should include the following:

1. To increase students' enthusiasm for the University as a place of learning and personal growth.

2. To increase students' and parents' knowledge of a range of information sources and support services which can subsequently be used as needed.

3. To increase students' and parents' understanding of what the University expects of students, not only regarding fulfillment of specific requirements but also with regard to standards of excellence and proficiency, study habits, and the like.

4. To increase student identification with the University as a helpful and hospitable environment for intellectual and personal growth. Stated differently, to decrease estrangement from what may be perceived as a cold and impersonal institution.

5. To begin building the student's sense of autonomy and self-directedness.

6. To initiate and support the advising and registration processes. That is, to communicate sufficient concrete information and stimulate the student's self-analytic and planning processes in a manner supportive of subsequent advising and schedule-building efforts.

Advising: It is useful to distinguish between advising which is associated directly with registration on the one hand and long-range academic planning on the other. The statements of objectives below are divided accordingly:

Registration-linked advising:

1. To have students knowledgeable of

-- the general requirements of their proposed courses of study

-- the expectations of their departments, colleges, and the University in terms of effort, standards of work, integrity, etc.

-- the place which courses selected for the next semester occupy in their total programs of study.

2. To assist in a timely, informed, and authoritative manner as students select courses for the following semester.

Long-range academic planning:

1. To promote student self-analysis of abilities and goals.

2. To encourage student learning of planning skills with regard to life goals, career goals, and academic goals.

3. To serve as a continuing mechanism for the flow of information, suggestions, and referral to other information and support services.

4. To help with the solution of academic problems generally and to assist in coping with academic shock in the freshman year.

The objectives of the registration process itself are:

1. To permit each student to select, within the limits determined by the resources and policies of the University, a schedule of classes appropriate to:

-- his or her educational goals

-- his or her background, aptitudes, and interests

-- his or her intended schedule for degree completion.

2. Registration should be arranged so that:

-- access to courses is as independent of registration date as possible

-- students who must begin a program by enrolling in certain courses are guaranteed enrollment in them

-- students who do not receive first choices may select alternatives from among which a guaranteed schedule can be built, and which will not delay completion of their programs

-- drop-add activities are minimized

-- forecasting of needs for adjustments in allocating teaching resources is permitted

-- maximum use is made of departmental and college resources in accommodating student needs, without overextending those resources.

3. In general, to support the objectives of other program elements of the freshman year, such as the gaining of academic planning skills, and the minimizing of organizational obstructions to the larger goals of intellectual and personal growth.

2. Assessments

If the freshman experience as a whole is unique and important, then surely those activities preliminary to actually attending the University are crucial. It is through these activities that the prospective student begins to form attitudes and opinions about the University and his relationship to it. Many of the topics addressed to the Task Groups on Admissions and Advising Conferences and, ultimately, the assessment of the effectiveness of existing programs, are based upon the simple premise that these preliminary activities should contribute to a positive attitude toward the University and toward intellectual pursuits in general; furthermore, the prospective student's energy and activity during this period should be directed toward the central aspects of a University

experience and not be dissipated by the technical (mechanical) details of applying, being admitted and enrolling in classes.

The University has a positive obligation to communicate to prospective students and their parents general knowledge of the education opportunities it has available. It is important that the message of the major state university reach all segments (racial, ability level, income level, and geographic area) of the state's population. Finally, where the University has programs of interest to special groups of prospective students, such as the handicapped, racial minorities, the elderly, the academically disadvantaged and those of superior achievement, it is right and proper that the University make a special effort to inform these groups of the programs.

The University attempts to meet these obligations through a variety of offices with numerous programs. The Dean of Admissions and Registrar has overall responsibility for communicating the general knowledge of University programs and opportunities and, in addition, serves informally as a coordinator for other informal programs and as a liaison between the prospective student and various University agencies. Other units which share in the responsibility for communicating with prospective students are the Office of the Vice President for Minority Affairs, the Honors Program, University Information Services, the Council on Aging in University Extension, Student Financial Aid Office, the Dean of Students, the

Housing Office, and several of the academic colleges.

The programs sponsored by these offices function effectively within the resource limitation imposed upon them. The most obvious deficiencies in our attempts at communication with prospective students are: 1)the lack of participation by faculty and other staff in the programs, 2)the lack of organized alumni participation, 3)the lack of strong, officially recognized coordination among the various programs, 4)inadequate printing budgets for this purpose, and 5)the fact that official publications tend to be written in a style comprehensible only to persons with knowledge of the University and which are, therefore, not really useful in communicating with prospective students.

Once the student has decided to attend the University, the actual mechanical processes of admission, assignment of residence hall space, and the determination of eligibility for financial aid should be completed with minimal effort on the part of the student. Two relatively recent programs developed primarily by the Office of the Dean of Admissions and Registrar have improved performance in this regard. The first of these is known as ENTER-ACT and provides for admission to the University through the application for the American College Test which is required of all entering freshmen. The other is COED which is an acronym for coordinated entrance determination. The objective of this program is to coordinate the efforts and informational needs of several agencies

including the Admissions Office, the Advising Conference, the Housing Office, and the Student Financial Aid Office so that correspondence between prospective students and the University is kept to minimum levels and to provide responses to student inquiries as quickly as possible. Although COED has smoothed the overall admissions procedures it suffers from the same lack of officially recognized coordination that impairs the effectiveness of other pre-admissions communications. Further, two of the offices involved, Housing and Student Financial Aid, have been unable to make definite commitments to entering students as early as is desirable.

After the student has been admitted to the University it is important that he or she be furnished with specific information concerning the chosen field of study, the techniques and desirability of early academic planning, and the needed special support services. Despite recent improvements, the fact remains that the University fails in this regard. This failure is <u>not</u> caused by a lack of information about the student. On the contrary, the ACT Student Profile contains a wealth of information about the student's academic interests, strengths and weaknesses, preferred extracurricular activities, areas of special interest and a "world-of-work" profile. The only systematic use made of this material during the time between admission and enrollment is by the Advising Conference Office which mails to each student a description of his declared major.

The fact that the University does not encourage and facilitate careful planning by the student during the period between admission and the Summer Advising Conference is serious enough in itself. It takes on added significance when one considers that the student's formal orientation to the University, academic advisement, and registration for the Fall Semester are packed into one eight-hour day. It is evident that if a student is to receive the fullest possible benefit from this experience he or she must be well prepared. The requirements for the major program must be understood; the student should have information about which courses to take and why; questions concerning housing and financial aid should have been settled before this time.

If this kind of preparation were accomplished before the Advising Conference, it would be possible to focus the student's attention on the larger questions he or she must face as a new University student. It would also be possible, in these circumstances, to view the Advising Conference as a continuation of the orientation and planning process rather than as an isolated, singular experience.

In a sense, then, it is difficult to make any meaningful assessment of the effectiveness of the Advising Conference program until these conditions are met. In another sense, however, it is possible to examine the content and structure of this pro-

gram to detect its strengths and weaknesses.

One of the primary objectives of an orientation program must be to provide information. Of particular importance in the Advising Conference is that both parents and students should obtain information about a variety of support services, both academic and personal, which can be used later as needed. Of equal importance is that the orientation program should increase parent and student identification with the University as a hospitable environment for personal and intellectual growth.

The Advising Conference orientation is planned and structured to serve these needs. It is doubtful, however, that the full potential of the orientation is realized because the allotted time is short and the participants are not properly prepared beforehand.

A third feature of the orientation program should be to increase the students' and parents' understanding of what the University expects of its students, both with regard to fulfillment of specific requirements and to more general expectations of work standards, study habits, and personal development(maturity). Again the program of the Advising Conference is planned to do this through the efforts of the academic advisers and the formal orientation activities. Because of the uneven quality of advise-

ment among the various colleges and because of the previously listed factors of time and preparation this message may not be adequately understood.

If the effectiveness of the orientation portion of the Advising Conference is difficult to assess, the advising portion is impossible. The time and preparation constraints which impair the orientation program are magnified during the advisement process. In addition, advising is further constrained because many classes have been closed to further enrollment. The net effect is that all too often the advising received by a student is aimed at enrolling him or her in a "full schedule of courses" which usually means finding at least twelve hours.

Even if this problem were remedied the advising portion of the conference would still be forced to concentrate on the immediate, registration-linked problems to the neglect of long-range academic planning and goal-setting. With this in mind, the primary objectives of the advising program should be to have students knowledgeable of the general requirements of their proposed courses of study, the expectations their departments, colleges and the University have for them, and, finally, to select courses which meet their academic and personal needs.

Even with this more restricted objective, the advising program does not always succeed, and the lack of success cannot

be attributed solely to the problems of time, inadequate student preparation and closed courses mentioned earlier. The best evidence that these factors do not necessarily imply failure is that some colleges do plan and implement sound advising programs in spite of these obstacles.

It is difficult to determine precisely the reasons some colleges are more successful than others in the initial advising of freshmen. A factor which apparently accounts for some of the differences is the importance attached to this activity. It appears that the more successful colleges view this first advising session as a means to welcome the student to the college and its programs; a time to begin thinking about long-range educational goals. The less successful colleges apparently treat the initial advising effort as a time for schedule preparation only and do not make allowances for the differing needs of entering students compared to continuing students.

Another factor of equal importance is the level of resources allocated to the Advising Conference by the various colleges. In fact, this may account for the perceived differences in attitudes among the colleges. In any event, some colleges are able to provide one-to-one or small group advising for students with similar academic interests while other colleges must resort

to advising large groups of students with markedly dissimilar goals. The largest such is the academically undecided group in the College of Arts and Sciences. While these students receive adequate information concerning general University and college requirements, information on services available in the University, and assistance with "schedule-building", the college is unable to provide any form of personal advisement or counseling.

The last portion of the Advising Conference day is used for registration. The frustrations of closed classes, schedule conflicts, inattentive clerks, and the general feeling of helplessness can negate what would otherwise have been a successful, informative day for the student. These problems are magnified during the later weeks of the Advising Conference period when the popular courses and times have been exhausted.

If registration is viewed simply as a mechanical process designed to enroll students in a schedule of classes, the primary objective would be to get it over with as quickly as possible with the least difficulty. In actual fact, registration activities do influence students' attitudes toward the University generally and toward its academic and intellectual life specifically. In this respect, these activities should be supportive of positive attitudes and should be viewed by the student as the culmination

of his planning efforts.

The question of the University's responsibility to meet all class space demands placed upon it by entering students is very difficult to resolve. It is clear that the University must weigh these demands against other program responsibilities and priorities in its planning of academic programs; nevertheless, each freshman should be able to select a schedule of classes appropriate to his or her educational goals, background, aptitudes and interests. In addition, students whose degree programs require enrollment in certain courses during the first semester should be guaranteed assignment of space in them. Other students who do not receive their first choice courses should be able to select alternatives which meet the goals set forth above.

There is no doubt that the University's performance in this regard is not completely satisfactory. There is uncertainty as to seriousness of the shortcomings, however. It is clear that not every student can select the entire schedule of classes he or she may desire. What is not clear is that students in this situation can make informed choices among alternative courses. From another point of view, the colleges try to make adequate numbers of spaces available in crucial courses. This cannot always be done and students must sometimes delay enrollment in important courses.

It should be noted here that no specific proposal for action will be addressed to this problem. Proposals having to do with improved advising and registration procedures for the Advising Conference will, if implemented, result in more informed course selection by students and, at the same time, remove many of the frustrations associated with registration. If a significant problem remains after these actions are taken, it can be more clearly identified and dealt with then.

It is impossible to evaluate the University's academic advising program for freshmen for the simple reason that there is no such single program. Various units are responsible for part of the total advising effort but there has been no University-wide attempt to plan and coordinate these diverse parts into a single, unified program of academic advising.

One of the most obvious results of the lack of overall planning and coordination is that the quality and quantity of advising received by our entering students is very uneven; moreover, there are some rather obvious gaps in the interchange between students and the University concerning academic matters.

We have already commented upon the fact that there is almost no attempt to advise students prior to Advising Conference. We have also stated our belief that under present circumstances

Advising Conferences must concentrate on advising which is directly linked to the immediate demands of registration. The need for this type of advising recurs each semester but there is no systematic procedure for communication between the Advising Conference adviser and the permanent academic adviser. A frequent result is that agreements and plans made between a student and the summer adviser are simply lost or forgotten in the transition.

Even with these obvious shortcomings, most entering students obtain a level of advising which is minimally adequate for registration. On the other hand, the importance of long-range academic planning is just beginning to be recognized. Perhaps the demands of the Sixties for relevancy in the curriculum have led to plans for universities to assist the student in relating academic experiences to career and life goals, to assist the students in their efforts to understand themselves, their abilities and interests, and relate them to academic programs.

Whatever the reason, there has been a growing, widespread concern that the University makes no concentrated effort to assist the student with academic and career planning. At least two units, the Counseling and Testing Center and the University Placement Service, provide some help to students who feel a need for this type planning and search out a means for obtain-

ing it. Laudably, the Division of Basic Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences has recognized that the large group of "undecided" freshmen need assistance of this sort and has trained its professional advisers to provide it. The College of Arts and Sciences has also recently organized several career workshops in conjunction with the Placement Service. Such efforts as these show that a number of individuals have already recognized the need to improve the delivery mechanisms by which we assist students with their academic and career planning. Some things <u>are</u> being done, but as commendable as these efforts are, it is clear that more needs to be done, and that University-wide attention to this need is necessary.

With reference to the gap between the Advising Conference and the arrival of freshmen on campus in August, one program of "extended orientation" is worthy of mention, and that is the Freshman Weekend. Organized by the Human Relations Center within the Division of Student Affairs, this weekend retreat at Camp Carlisle annually attracts from eighty to a hundred freshmen. For those students who elect to attend, it is an unusual opportunity to communicate openly and at close quarters with University students, staff and faculty, as well as with each other. A close sense of community is built while anticipations of University life are being worked out. On the whole

the Freshman Weekend gets very favorable reviews from students. The Commission will make no specific recommendations regarding this program, but notes its existence and expresses the hope that it will continue, expand, and become more substantially a part of orientation to the University for a significant number of freshmen.

Part B. Academic Courses and Content

1. Objectives

Ultimate Outcomes: The processes described here will have begun long before students arrive and will continue throughout the undergraduate career. It would be incorrect, however, to view the freshman year merely as a continuation of high school work. Rather, there should be a perceptible difference in the level of performance required, in the intensity of the experience, and in the nature of the material studied in the first year at the University. Goals to be achieved through the academic programs in the freshman year include the following:

1. Attitudes toward learning. Students should develop in the first year the attitude that learning and intellectual endeavors are valuable experiences to be continued throughout life. The freshman year experience should give students a heightened sense of intellectual questing and the drive to explore new areas of knowledge, both as independent learners and in concert with others.

2. Attitude toward the freshman experience. The student should feel that the academic experience of the freshman year has been of positive value to him, that he has encountered significant new ideas, that he has improved basic learning skills and is well prepared to embark on the remainder of his college career.

3. Methods of inquiry. The student should develop familiarity with methodologies used in the various disciplines for scholarly investigation. While it is not expected that the student will master such strategies and techniques, he should be aware of them, understand something of their strengths and limitations, and begin developing facility in use of those pertinent to his intellectual interests. In addition, he should master knowledge of such learning resources as those available in the University Libraries, together with development of skill in using them.

4. Inductive and deductive thought. The student should be aware of the process of drawing conclusions based on general premises, and the process of abstracting generalizations from particular events, together with the strengths and limits of these methods. By the end of the freshman year students should be able to recognize and apply both types of reasoning processes.

5. Questioning attitude. Beyond acquiring tools of inquiry and logical thinking, the student should learn to analyze and critique what are presented to him as claims and conclusions in everyday life. He should develop to the point that statements and conclusions are no longer necessarily accepted at face value but are analyzed for meaning, supporting evidence, and validity.

6. Increased knowledge base. Freshman students should increase both the breadth and depth of their knowledge in major areas of intellectual endeavor. The study of new subject matter should be begun and work on familiar subjects should be intensified.

7. Aesthetic development. The freshman student should grow in his capacity to see beauty and respond to it. Shaping of the aesthetic response should not be confined to the context of the traditional fine and performing arts, but extend to the products of scholarly disciplines and other artifacts of human culture, and to the natural world as well.

8. Creativity. Stated negatively this objective would be "To prevent stifling of whatever creativity a freshman brings to the University." More positively, the freshman should find in the curriculum the broader University environment the conditions which will promote creative skills, both artistic and intellectual.

9. Communications ability. Freshmen should improve the traditional skills of writing and speaking as well as skills in reading and listening. A level of proficiency should be achieved by the end of the freshman year which extends beyond survival skills and encompasses the ability to organize and present complex material in clear

and concise form in standard English, and the ability to comprehend complex material presented in a style and using a vocabulary appropriate to educated persons.

10. Personal development. Freshmen should make progress in establishing personal developmental goals, the exploration of issues of identity, morality, values, and social and political responsibility. Ideally, a freshman year experience should result in increased tolerance, self-knowledge, self-confidence, planning skills, value awareness, and autonomy, among other developmental goals which can be directly affected by academic programs.

Intermediate Objectives:

To enhance the likelihood of students attaining these outcomes, the following means are seen as desirable:

1. To provide highly qualified instruction for freshmen - models of the inquiring mind and the effective learner and teacher for freshmen. Implicit in the assuring of quality freshman instruction is the provision of adequate support services for teaching and instructional improvement among faculty and graduate teaching assistants.

2. To provide opportunities for exchange of ideas and tests of evidence and reasoning between faculty and students, through the inclusion of seminar experiences in the freshman year.

3. To permit that kind of close interaction between freshmen and faculty members in the context of academic subjects, which will impart a sense of the uniqueness of an individual's approach, his or her enthusiasm and intellectual excitement about the subject.

4. To require as a part of every freshman student's program some exercise in the effective use of a variety of learning resources.

5. To require as part of the freshman academic experience practice in planning and decision-making skills in the context of curricula and course work. Stated negatively, to avoid excessive preemption of students' academic choices.

6. For students who have not firmly selected career and educational goals, general study opportunities and support services should be available which will allow exploration and information to assist in later planning of a program of study.

For students who have set clear career and educational goals, first year study should provide a sense of the major issues and areas of endeavor in the chosen field of study, and the techniques for dealing with these issues. These students should learn early what comprises study in the selected major field and understand the implications of career commitment.

7. To achieve as well as possible a careful matching of freshmen with courses by considering ability level, developmental level, and individual teaching-learning style. A related objective is to make available to freshmen a diversity of courses, in terms both of content and intellectual level, from a variety of colleges.

8. To provide experiences which increase freshmen's self-knowledge, both of abilities and goals.

9. To provide sufficient academic challenge that the experience is distinguishable from secondary school and is appropriate to a university education.

10. To expose freshman students to situations where evaluation and choice are required and discussed, so that issues of ethics, morality, and values can be raised to the level of consciousness.

2. Assessments

A major portion of the responsibility for meeting the overall goals for the freshman year belongs to the academic programs offered beginning students. Indeed, many of these goals find their most natural expression in terms of the academic and intellectual experiences of the freshman student. While it is possible to over-emphasize the importance of intellectual as opposed to personal growth, it is through academic courses that students have their most important contact with the University.

The assessment of the academic program for freshmen concentrates more on program elements than on the impact of the program. Most emphasis has been placed on those elements of the freshman year curriculum which are most likely to have direct or indirect influence on learning and attitudes toward intellectual endeavor.

In a general sense, the Commission was gratified to learn that there is widespread concern for, if not agreement on, the curriculum of the freshman year. Indeed, many of the problems and questions placed before the Task Group on Academic Offerings and Instruction had already been recognized and, to some extent,

dealt with by various colleges and departments. In this regard, however, there is a pervasive problem in the University: many departments and colleges are approaching very similar problems in isolation from one another. Each was more or less unaware of the efforts of the others and found it difficult to place their own efforts in a University-wide context.

In the stated objectives for the academic program of the freshman year there are two concerns which might be seen as preliminary but important. First, the freshman year should be a challenging experience which is clearly distinguished from high school. Apparently this is the case but it is also true that the knowledge of the content and methodology of high school courses varies greatly from department to department. Some departments have close ties to their secondary school counterparts; others seem to be only vaguely aware of recent changes in high school programs.

The other preliminary concern has to do with the diversity and richness of the freshman curriculum. In one sense the question should be phrased in terms of entry levels: is there a sufficient diversity to permit entering students to find courses suited to abilities and developmental levels? Until the 1975-76 academic year there were only three academic departments, Chemistry, English, and Mathematics, which provided different entry level

courses for students with differing backgrounds and abilities. Other departments have courses which are not based upon background or ability level but on the future plans of the student. Typical of these courses are the physics course, PHY 151-152, and the general economics course, ECO 160. Characteristic of these courses is the fact that they do not lead to advanced study in the discipline but are intended as a general education introduction to the subject.

The recently established Developmental Studies Program in the College of Arts and Sciences provides special assistance to the academically disadvantaged student. While the degree credit courses taken by students in this program have the same title and number as regular University courses, and the same exit standards, students are allowed to begin at levels suitable to their own abilities and backgrounds and proceed through the courses at their own pace.

In addition to the question of levels of entry into the curriculum we are concerned with the diversity of the freshman courses. We believe a freshman student should be able to choose from a rich variety of courses from several colleges. Moreover, those students who have clearly identified career and educational goals should be able to learn early what comprises study in the selected major field and understand career implications. Students

who are not so firmly committed to a particular field of study or career objective should have access to general course work which will allow exploration and provide information useful in their planning.

The colleges of Agriculture, Home Economics and Social Professions, offer beginning courses for students who have selected programs in their colleges. The College of Engineering provides a non-credit "Engineering Professions" course for students who plan to study engineering. All of these courses might be seen as serving the needs of both students who have selected a career and those who wish further exploration, but the impression of the members of the Commission is that the courses are designed for the students who have already made career decisions.

The departments in the College of Arts and Sciences offer general education courses at the freshman level with very few distinctions based on the needs of the students. Students who have already selected a major in sociology, for example, begin in the General Studies course SOC 101 which is also the only option available to those who wish to explore sociology as a possible major. Frequently when a single course must serve a three-fold purpose the result is either lack of focus of content or the course is designed around the needs of one group of students to the exclusion of others. While this is

not necessarily an argument for more specialized courses it is an argument for departments to consider varying needs of students in planning freshman courses.

In recent years there have been very few changes in the freshman curriculum. Some departments have added new courses and others have restructured existing ones but there is no evidence that these have been fundamental changes which reflect broad planning to meet the needs of students. Even so, the diversity of freshman courses is adequate, if only minimally so. Still, we note that not all students have an opportunity to select a rich sample. In the first place, essentially all the General Studies courses are located in the College of Arts and Sciences. Naturally, these courses receive the heaviest enrollments. Further, many courses are closed early in the Summer Advising Conference. Finally, there is too little time devoted to advising in the Summer Advising Conference and advisers are not always capable of advising students with special needs. This is particularly true for those students who are "undecided", a group which comprises roughly 20% of the entering class.

Beyond concerns for the curriculum itself, perhaps the most important factor in the success of the freshman year is what the student meets in the classroom. Certainly an essential ingredient of a satisfactory academic experience is qualified instruction in

whatever mode it is offered.

Because many first-year courses are taught by graduate teaching assistants, a number of departments were asked to describe both the preparation provided for teaching and the procedures used in assigning students to teaching functions. Here again, the responses showed a fair degree of departmental concern and thought, but little sharing of solutions or resources. The departments questioned tended to select the better known teachers from among available pools of graduate students, pools which in some cases are shrinking.

The shrinkage of available talent suggests that a new source of supply may soon have to be sought for teaching freshman courses, as the old model of interdependence between graduate training and freshman teaching erodes.

If graduate enrollments continue to decline in the affected departments, the quality of freshman teaching may indeed become a more serious problem, requiring changes in teaching assignments among the regular faculty or importation of teaching specialists for this purpose.

The departments contacted by the Commission also showed their concern for the quality of teaching by graduate students in the degree to which they have given attention to preparation for teaching. Virtually all departments encourage new

teaching assistants to attend the annual University-wide Teaching Assistant Orientation Program held each August. In addition, many departments hold their own training and orientation sessions. At least one department (Sociology) offers a credit course in teaching for its graduate students. All departments reported that they employ some means for supervision of teaching assistants.

All in all, despite evidence of concern there is still considerable room for improvement in the preparation and oversight of teaching assistants. Such preparation is an investment not only in the quality of learning experiences to which our freshmen are exposed, but also in the careers of many graduate students who are more likely to find teaching rather than pure research roles. One conclusion from this study is that one or more courses in the teaching of broad subject areas need to be devised which either meet standards for graduate credit or which are accepted as part of the teaching assistant's work load.

In addition to the training of graduate students, the Commission investigated the practices of various departments and colleges in assigning regular faculty members to freshman classes. In all departments contacted, regular faculty members participate in the first-year program in one form or another. In some cases,

such as mathematics, faculty members are routinely assigned to small (25-30) freshman classes. In other departments faculty members lecture to a large group of students while discussion or laboratory classes are taught by graduate assistants. There are other variations, but there was no evidence that academic departments view the freshman year as the responsibility of the graduate students with the regular faculty responsible only for the upper division and graduate curricula.

Going further, departments were asked if there were recognizable patterns of assigning the best or worst teacher among the faculty to freshman courses. Most departments have been concerned with this question and have made efforts to improve the quality of instruction in freshman courses by assigning their better teachers to them. The practices and means of selection, however, vary from department to department and not all departments are able to realize the goal of assigning the most qualified instructors to the first-year classes.

Again it was evident that departments and colleges were approaching this problem unilaterally with little coordination or cooperation at a broader level. It is difficult to judge the impact of such lack of coordination, but several of the persons interviewed did remark that they found it difficult to relate their efforts to any general University-wide goal or,

indeed, policy statement.

Beyond the access to qualified instruction each freshman student should have the opportunity of close interaction with a regular faculty member in small classes, preferably in seminars or discussion sections. This is a valid objective even though some freshman students are uncomfortable in small classes and might actually prefer the anonymity afforded by large lectures. Furthermore, providing such an opportunity on a large scale basis is costly and might require that resources be shifted to the freshman year program from other parts of the curriculum. Even with these obstacles, interaction between faculty and students is so important to the development of the student and such a fundamental part of our educational system that this is a high priority objective.

This view of the importance of small classes is supported by the students themselves. Two members of the Task Group on Courses and Academic Content, Tom Sturgis and Juanita Fleming, conducted a rather extensive survey of members of the 1975 freshman class to determine their attitudes toward the University. The most frequently heard suggestion for improving the freshman experience was to reduce class size.

Meeting the limited objective of providing at least one small class for each student will require University-wide co-

ordination and cooperation. It would be nearly impossible for a single department to accomplish this by itself; moreover, unless the efforts of each unit can be placed in the wider context of a University program, much of the impact will be lost.

There are two goals for the freshman year which seem to be independent of any particular departmental offering or curriculum. Nevertheless, they are important and warrant special attention in this assessment. First, departments should attempt to make effective use of the available education technologies. Until very recently, departments or faculty members who wished to use instructional technologies had to search out and select them pretty much on their own. The recent establishment of the Office of Instructional Resources which contains a section responsible for instructional development reflects a commitment by the University to assist faculty members in this and other areas of development.

Another objective which is independent of any department is that each freshman student should learn to use a variety of learning resources. While the intent of the objective is to include more than use of the library, certainly this is an important part. The Office of Instructional Development in the M.I. King Library has prepared and is now teaching a short course in use of the library to all ENG 102 students. This

program is imaginative and goes far beyond the usual familiarization tour. It is a very useful addition to the program of the University.

Any attempt to summarize the findings of this Commission relative to the academic content and instruction in freshman-level courses must be quite general in nature. Probably the most significant finding is that many of the problems and concerns voiced by the Commission were already well known in the academic units. Moreover, the actions taken by individual units to strengthen their own courses have resulted in an adequate freshman year curriculum. There are, however, many areas for improvement and perhaps some gaps to be filled in the curriculum. Finally, in some efforts, University-wide coordination and policy are needed if the full benefits of individual efforts are to be realized.

Part C. Campus Climate

1. Objectives

Objectives for campus climate can be stated either as desired student outcomes or as steps to be taken by the University to create a desired atmosphere. Both approaches are used below by stating three

major goals for freshmen and subsuming under each goal a number of more specific objectives:

1. To assist students in feeling genuinely welcome and at home in the University environment and to engender a sense of community and institutional respect, by

   a) articulating the University's goals in clear and realistic terms intelligible to freshmen,

   b) anticipating the special needs of freshman students and responding with a minimum of procedural complexity,

   c) providing timely information and support for each student's efforts to grow, learn, and explore,

   d) encouraging a feeling of belonging and University identification through opportunities to develop friendships, participate in social, recreational, and cultural programs, associate with persons with similar interests, and learn to relate to individuals different from themselves, and

   e) offering students personalized assistance when they confront problems which are particularly difficult.

2. To assist students in learning more about their individual interests, abilities, and values, and to encourage informed self-confidence in decision-making about academic work and other activities, by

a) providing easy access to qualified helping professionals and paraprofessionals,

b) reflecting respect for the individuality of each student, encouraging student innovation, and responding to individual and social needs of students,

c) encouraging students to develop self-understanding, to make career and educational decisions based on such understanding, and to test their tentative decisions in realistic settings,

d) supporting students in exploring their beliefs and in developing personal commitments,

e) fostering student autonomy and creativity by encouraging students to acquire knowledge and experience through extracurricular and off-campus contexts.

3. To provide students with a rich array of University programs, learning resources, and facilities, and to encourage students to utilize them effectively for personal and intellectual growth, by

a) encouraging a level of quality in extracurricular programming that is supportive of the University's academic and intellectual mission,

b) encouraging students to explore a wide range of learning options, including opportunities outside the formal academic program,

c) publicizing to students the rich variety of programs, services, and resources available,

d) drawing on the learning potential inherent in the diverse membership of the University community,

e) linking formal learning to experiences outside the classroom in ways that encourage the development of communication skills, leadership skills, creativity, logical analysis, and aesthetic appreciations,

f) creating extensive opportunities for educationally meaningful student-faculty-staff interaction outside the classroom through the effective use of residential settings, common lounges, retreats, and short-term workshops on topics of mutual interest, and

g) enriching the residential life of freshmen with a variety of educational programming and academic support services.

2. Assessments

The most accurate statement that can be made about the campus climate at UK as it has impact on freshmen is that very little is known about it as a result of systematic study. Several broad conclusions are suggested, however, by the perceptive comments of the Task Group on Campus Climate. Additional insights and information have been obtained through an extended conversation with a group of second-semester freshmen, and by looking at some preliminary findings from a survey of students conducted in the spring of 1976 by the Division of Student Affairs. This mailed survey

covered a large number of concerns and needs perceived by students, asking respondents whether they had had such problems during the year and, if so, how adequately they had been dealt with. (The rate of return of questionnaires was around 62%. The sample appears to be fairly representative of the student population by classification. Only preliminary analyses have been carried out, however, so that proper caution should be exercised in interpreting data presented below.) The conclusions discussed below are based largely on the Task Group report but are supplemented by information from other sources.

One conclusion is that the University makes its strongest statements about intellectual matters only in the carefully concealed confines of the classroom. Because student-faculty-staff interaction outside the classroom is relatively underemphasized, an attitude of compartmentalization is encouraged, effectively denying the relationships among all ideas, the capacity for continuing conversation, and an academic atmosphere which reinforces the classroom. The evidence for such a conclusion is impressionistic and anecdotal, but it is reinforced by strong perceptions that students, faculty, and staff all construct conceptual barriers between academic and nonacademic life. In fact, the University is organized in a fashion which recognizes and enhances such a distinction. The consequences may be that

the strongest nonclassroom concerns and activities on the campus obviate much that is supposed to happen as a result of the academic program. The low level of faculty-staff-student interaction is thus seen as a major problem in campus climate.

Another conclusion tentatively reached by the Task Group on Campus Climate was that nonacademic counseling and advising is perceived by students as adequate for freshmen at the University. The Commission believes that services available through residence halls and through the Counseling and Testing Center provide valuable additions to the campus climate. On the other hand, in view of the limited evaluative information available, it would be premature to conclude, as did one student, that things are "in pretty good shape" across the board. As noted elsewhere, for example, it is currently necessary for a student to show considerable initiative in taking advantage of the services of the Counseling and Testing Center. This is understandable in view of the relatively small size of the Center staff and some difficulty in physical access to the Center, but it may be desirable to seek additional support for the unit to enable a stronger outreach emphasis.

In general, the adequacy of nonacademic counseling and advising throughout the University cannot be known without further assessment efforts. The Student Affairs survey suggests that

freshman students are not experiencing as much difficulty in the area of personal problems as they are with self-assessments and life-planning in general. For example, only 13% of freshmen say they have felt a need for obtaining help in resolving a personal problem, whereas 41% were concerned with deciding on a vocation or career, 45% with clarifying life goals, 38% with understanding themselves, 31% with exploring and clarifying their personal values, and 26% in having a professional evaluation of their aptitudes, interests and abilities.

With regard to advising in general, the newly implemented advising program in the College of Arts and Sciences, aimed primarily at undecided students, is also recognized as valuable and worthy of encouragement. The extent of need for such improvements in advising systems is suggested by the Student Affairs survey, which shows that among the freshman sample, 55% report having concerns about selecting courses wisely for the following semester, 52% say they have had concerns planning their academic programs consistent with career or life goals, 44% say they have been concerned about clarifying their academic goals, 47% say they have had concerns in choosing majors. The finding that only 11% of freshmen in the sample felt a need to undertake independent study, 4% to undertake study outside Kentucky, 5% to study in a foreign country may suggest the need to assist students in explor-

ing alternative educational opportunities.

Needs and recommendations in the general areas of advising and career exploration and planning are touched on in other sections of this report. It might be pointed out again here that students and staff alike will have to learn more about the skills involved in longer-range planning and decision-making.

With regard to achieving a supportive relationship between campus events and student learning, it must be said first that the University enjoys a plethora of non-academic activities and events. There is, however, a considerable range in quality, there is little coordination, little continuity, and little attempt to relate them to academic life. Even the gathering and disseminating of information on campus events could be made more effective in view of the present scattered nature of this function. Departmental functions, for example, sometimes go unnoticed by students, especially freshmen who have not learned where to search for news of events of interest. The problem of collecting information and disseminating it must be solved as well as the larger one of thinking through ways to relate more events to student learning. The Student Affairs survey indicates that knowledge of activities and events is a frequent concern of freshmen students. Forty-nine percent of freshmen responding

said that being informed regularly about campus events, programs, and issues had been a need or concern during the past year.

The question was raised by the Commission whether options for recreation and entertainment were compatible with the personal and social needs of freshmen. The conclusion reached by the Task Group was that the distinction between freshman and other classifications of students was not especially useful in discussing availability of recreation and entertainment. As with many other aspects of the Freshman Year Commission charges, the problems in this area were assessed as those of students in general, not just freshmen. This contention is borne out in the results of the Student Affairs survey, which shows that 36% of both freshmen and all other undergraduates said they had felt concern about participating in sports and recreational activities.

The Commission observes that current available options in entertainment and recreation programs place less emphasis on an academically effective environment than is desirable. For example, there are, with some notable exceptions, few departmental or college entertainment events. For another example, the academically-slanted competitions (e.g., the Oswald Undergraduate Research and Creativity Competition) are not well publicized, nor is enough attention shown to our outstanding student scholars and performers.

In looking at the question of whether residence halls are used effectively as learning resources, the Task Group on Campus Climate finds that those persons concerned with residence hall programming are aware of the need to use them more effectively as learning resource centers. Nevertheless, it would seem that residence halls (and in some cases the Greek houses) could be used to greater benefit for freshmen - and all students - in supporting the attainment of academic and intellectual goals. This conclusion echoes similar findings of the Commission on the Quality of Student Residential Life, created by the Vice President for Student Affairs in 1971. There is still today some discussion of the question: To what extent do students themselves desire more special programming in residence halls which is supportive of the broader intellectual mission of the University? The answer obviously depends on what is done and how it is done. For the past four years, experiments have been carried out in teaching regular University courses in residence hall settings. The results have shown that students do indeed find favor with the idea of learning in courses with fellow residents. For another example, the idea of mini-libraries in residence halls has clearly been found acceptable to students. In fact, the need for additional mini-library holdings was demonstrated to the Commission during the past year, with the result

that additional resources were found to support this program.

It would appear that, despite the clear concern of many persons involved in this important area of campus life, the need to utilize residential settings in support of the learning mission of the University is not always recognized or acted upon. This shortcoming is especially important in the case of freshmen, who learn early to segregate campus life from the life of the mind or from personal growth. It is additionally important in the case of freshmen because a larger number of them are in residence halls than is true of upperclassmen.

Another topic of concern addressed under the rubric of campus climate was that of the visibility of value systems. Does the University atmosphere lend itself to value awareness and value development among freshmen? The Task Group on Campus Climate reported its impressions as follows:

> Presumably, the value systems most institutionally visible to freshmen are residence hall regulations and course requirements. One difficulty with these formulations is that, though they are presented as means to ends, they are often perceived as ends in themselves. As a consequence, students may respond to them with anger, cynicism, or a narrowing misplaced emphasis.
>
> One freshman among us reported rather high visibility of religious value concerns in conversations in the dorm and dining halls; some attention to social values (marriage, dating); little interaction concerning political or intellectual values and life goals. We presume that emphasis on different areas of values

> differs from subgroup to subgroup. Most striking, in her report, is the total absence of value concerns from the classroom. This may, in part, reflect an inability to recognize value concerns unless they come in the form of exhortations. We suspect, however, that her report also accurately reflects a non-concern with explicit examination of human values in the classroom.

(In support of the conclusion that more attention may be needed to value issues, the Student Affairs survey found that 31% of the freshmen responding reported that during the year they had felt a need or concern for exploring and clarifying their personal values.) The Task Group went further to say that a climate of superficiality was encouraged when the University made its most explicit value statements about matters of less than major importance, and that students were missing opportunities to examine their own values and study the implications of choice-making. Greater sensitivity to the need to have freshmen grapple with value issues is needed among faculty and residence hall personnel particularly.

The problem of complexity of procedure surfaces under the heading of campus climate as well as other places in the study. Coping with complexity is, of course, itself a skill or an art to be mastered for successful living in our age. The point is that it should not become an impediment to the development of freshmen as students and persons. Expressions of this problem

surfaced in the Student Affairs survey at several points. For example, learning where to go for information or assistance was cited as having been a concern by 57% of freshmen. Learning about student activities and organizations and how to gain access to them was a problem for 37% of the freshman respondents. And 46% said that they had felt a need to get assistance in getting started in college, getting acquainted, learning the ropes, and overcoming apprehensions about the University.

The conclusion of the Commission, without evidence specific enough to measure the precise extent of the problem, is that the University does not do as good a job as it could in designing procedures and information flow in a manner convenient to freshmen. It appears in some instances that what has been maximized is the convenience of individual organizational units, not the clientele, and that the motivating force has not been noticeably educational in nature. Despite repeated attempts on the part of many individuals who have compiled directories and "who's who" lists, designed information services, and organized referral centers, the problem of too much "bureaucracy" intrudes on the campus atmosphere, especially from the point of view of new freshmen.

It was hoped that some clues about negative features of campus life could be found in reasons students give for withdrawing from the University during the freshman year. The Student

Affairs survey indicates that even among freshmen still enrolled late in the spring of 1976, 28% said they had been concerned with deciding whether they would continue at the University or withdraw. If over one-fourth have considered withdrawing, beyond the number who have actually left the University, it is clear that we should discover more about the reasons for their possible or actual departure. Unfortunately, sufficiently detailed explanations of withdrawals are not available, as the Task Group report indicates. It cannot be concluded that withdrawing students are given inadequate assistance and information about alternative courses of action, but it does appear that more systematic and detailed information needs to be collected from students. It is not possible at this time to make generalizations about the contribution of negative factors in campus life to early withdrawal.

In fact, there are many gaps in our knowledge about our freshmen and the impact that the University's various programs have or do not have on them. Since comprehensive use of the OPI was discontinued and the continued participation in the annual ACE Freshman Survey is somewhat in jeopardy, we will know even less about our freshmen in the future than we have in the past.

Nor do we have but the most superficial data about student perceptions and assessments of various programs aimed at freshmen. Until the Student Affairs survey of students' perceptions of their

needs and problems in the late spring of 1976*, virtually the only sources of information from students on such matters were heresay or anecdotal in nature. The value of the latter should not be underestimated, of course. One is able to conclude with some firmness after a series of chance conversations with freshmen that they do, on the whole, see the University as a friendly place. They reveal also that the freshman year moves at a fast pace and puts them under stress, requiring adaptation to new frustrations and challenges. One also learns that for many students the weekends are slow, that the size of the institution shrinks rapidly in the first weeks of school, that a number of freshmen are intimidated by their first weeks in classes, that UK has a reputation for high academic standards compared to the rest of the state, and that for other students the supposition of high academic standards is a "laugh". Such perceptions are useful to understand, and they reveal the important fact that each person experiences his own climate.

There has not been, since about 1970, any campus-wide attempt to follow up students in order to gauge the impact the University has made on them. The absence of such information makes decisions about programming for freshman needs more ill-informed than can

*Additional data from this survey are included in Appendix G.

be justified. It also permits distortion and selective perception on the part of decision-makers attempting to assay student responses to program efforts. And it leaves the University with no baseline against which to assess student qualities and achievements at a later time.

Overall, the Commission finds a number of strengths and healthy features in the climate of the campus. The continued concern of a number of individuals has contributed to an atmosphere which many freshmen find favorable to their intellectual and personal growth. On the other hand, there are numerous inconsistencies in the hidden messages sent to students by operating policies, there is inadequate coordination and cooperation among the parts of the system so that the whole does not work as effectively as it should, and there is a good deal of ignorance about the clientele for whom we are working and about attainment of the goals we hope we and they should achieve.

Chapter III. PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

The conclusions and recommendations drawn up in this section are derived after lengthy and careful consideration by members of the Commission as well as members of the University community with special expertise and interests. The major source of information and recommendations considered were the Task Groups, whose reports are appended. Advice and information from the Task Groups were supplemented by interviews with faculty, staff, students, and administrative officers. The proposals resulting from these processes of study, recommendation and discussion are considered among the more feasible and highly desirable ideas which have come forth during the life of the Commission. It is hoped that these proposals can serve as blueprints for immediate action on the parts of those offices and individuals within the University for whom these recommendations represent appropriate responsibilities. It is, of course, fully expected that many of these ideas, which represent <u>proposals</u> for action, will require fuller discussion before

they are translated into concrete plans for implementation.

The proposals for action are grouped under the following headings:

1. Pre-admission Information and Student Recruitment
2. The Advising Conferences
3. Academic Advising and Information Services
4. Academic Programs and Course Content
5. Residential Life
6. Cultural Enrichment and Recreational Programming
7. Research on Freshmen
8. Coordination and Oversight Responsibilities

1. Pre-admission Information and Student Recruitment

The primary source of proposed actions in this section is the report of the Task Group on Pre-admission Contact and Student Recruitment. As it happened, fortunately, many of the issues of concern addressed by this task group were already recognized by others on the campus so that these proposed actions are in many cases calls for renewed attention to, or modifications of, on-going programs rather than proposals for new programs.

The Task Group, for example, recommends ways in which the involvement of faculty, staff, and students in recruitment could be increased. Each of these groups has an important role to play in carrying the message of the state's major university to its constituency, and each has a role to play in explaining the nature and challenge of a University of Kentucky education in

various subject fields. In some instances, these groups are already involved in such activities. This is particularly true in smaller colleges and interest groupings. In these cases what is called for is greater coordination and leadership. In other cases, where there is almost no involvement of such groups, new programs will have to be developed.

The Commission endorses the proposal to facilitate contacts between potential students and academic units in which interest has been expressed, as described by the Task Group. It is proposed that the pre-admission section of the Admissions Office take the initiative in organizing such a program, coordinating it with existing ones. The use of alumni in the recruitment process is deserving of further study.

It is proposed further that the pre-admissions section in the Office of Admissions coordinate all the recruiting activities of the colleges and other units on the campus. These activities would continue to be operated by the offices presently responsible for them. As in several other areas, general policy development and oversight of the totality of University activities in recruitment and pre-admission contact will be assigned to the proposed freshman coordinators.

One of the growing concerns of the University must be to attract special groups of students, particularly those of

superior ability and those from racial or ethnic minorities. One of the means frequently suggested for attracting superior students is to offer a number of non-need based scholarships. While this is effective, it is equally important that the University attract such students by presenting itself as an institution committed to excellence with challenging programs for bright students. There have been increases in the number of non-need based scholarships in recent years. Their availability has been publicized extensively; however, a single office, namely Student Financial Aid, should maintain information on all types of undergraduate financial aid available at the University, including special funds available through departments.

Another major concern with the pre-admission information available to freshmen is the quality of the publications used for this purpose. A general review of all University publications used by prospective students, from the General Catalog to form letters, is in order. The main purpose of this review should be to determine their impact on prospective students and increase their usefulness as information sources. A primary goal should be to have publications convey a sense of warmth and welcome as they provide useful information to prospective students. The Commission recommends that those units having responsibility for these publications, most particularly the

Dean of Admissions and Registrar and University Information Services, determine immediately where needed professional editorial and writing assistance should be considered. Consideration should also be given to the preparation of materials designed for prospective students who are not familiar with the University and its programs. One such publication is described in the section on advising in this report.

The Commission is aware of and endorses the concept underlying the proposed book of essays describing for new freshmen a number of views of the University experience. This collection, prepared by students, faculty, staff, and an alumnus, and to be published for dissemination to newly entering freshmen in spring, 1977, will convey, from a variety of personal viewpoints, the intellectual excitement, challenge, and individual meaning of the University of Kentucky. The intent of this book is to provide a mind-set positively oriented to learning, emphasizing the variety of purposes which motivate this community of minds. It may assist in building greater continuity between the time of admission and the student's first serious visit to the campus at the Advising Conference.

2. The Advising Conferences

In this section the proposed actions are divided into two categories: improving the existing one-day Summer Advising

Conference and developing an optional two-day program. Perhaps the most critical improvement in the existing program is to devise a registration system which complements rather than detracts from the remainder of the program. The Commission agrees with the recommendation from its Task Group on Advising Conferences that the best solution to the existing problem is to have entering students register for classes in much the same way that continuing students advance register each semester. The differing needs of entering students require, however, certain changes in the advance registration system. First, even though the actual assignment of students to classes would be done at the completion of the Advising Conference, it will be necessary to have several "dummy" scheduling runs to monitor the demand for various courses. It will also be necessary to develop a priority system for assigning students to various courses. At the very least this system should permit students who must enroll in certain courses because of program requirements to be given first choice in these courses. A desirable secondary feature would be to allow students to select alternative courses if they cannot be assigned spaces in the ones requested.

It is hoped that the Dean of Admissions and Registrar will be able to accomplish the planning and development in order to implement this new registration procedure in the 1977 Summer

Advising Conference.

One of the reasons that the revision of registration procedures is so important is that these activities currently consume such a large portion of the Advising Conference day. The proposed revision will allow more time for orientation and advising activities and, therefore, will require that the Advising Conference staff, in conjunction with the Freshman Year coordinators, give increased attention to review and revision of program content. In conducting this review, these groups should keep in mind student needs and University objectives for the freshman year as well as program needs of the University. In the latter category, the provision of time for academic placement examinations should be considered strongly.

With regard to the University's objectives for the freshman year, the most important revision of the existing Advising Conference program is to reduce the current emphasis on registration-linked advising (i.e., "schedule building") and, correspondingly, to place greater stress on long-range planning.

To accomplish this objective each academic college will have to provide conference advisors who have been trained in the techniques of long-range academic and career planning. Some colleges may have the requisite expertise and resources to offer such training but others do not. For this reason, it is hoped that

the Division of Student Affairs through the Counseling and Testing Center and the Placement Service will cooperate with the Division of Colleges through the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to develop workshops and other appropriate means for training of advisors prior to the 1977 Summer Advising Conference.

If this shift in advising is to be accomplished, not only is it necessary to change the registration process to provide more time during the advising conference day, but the students must be better prepared by an active advising program prior to the conference itself. Proposals for developing and implementing such a program are described in the section on advising of this report.

Even if the proposed revisions are made in the one-day conference, it is likely that some students and their parents will find a longer, more complete orientation and advising session more satisfying and valuable. For this reason it is proposed that the University experiment with a two-day advising conference in 1977 if the necessary planning and development can be accomplished in time. The proposed freshman year coordinators will, when appointed, be asked to co-chair a group charged with the responsibility of planning a two-day program. This group will have to include broader representation than the existing SAC staff because a two-day program will require the involvement of

agencies such as the Student Housing Office and, possibly, Campus Recreation, which do not currently participate in the Advising Conference.

3. Academic Advising and Information Services

Although no single task group was charged with a general study of the University's efforts in the academic advisement of freshmen students, all the reports dealt with this topic in one form or another. For this reason it is desirable to include a section devoted to the general area of academic advisement and information services in this part of the report on the freshman year. Much of what is proposed here duplicates material to be found in other sections.

As noted earlier in this report, there is no concerted effort to provide academic advising during the period between the admission of a student and the Summer Advising Conference. This neglect negatively impacts both the advising during the conference and later during the academic year because the students are usually not prepared to discuss substantive issues concerning their academic and career plans. To remedy this situation the following developments are proposed:

1) A computerized letter to each admitted student based upon his or her ACT profile. This letter should contain information on the student's selected

course of study or information on the techniques of academic planning; moreover, it should, where appropriate, interpret ACT scores in terms of actual University of Kentucky courses and requirements (e.g., a student scoring 22 or higher on the English portion would be told that he or she needs to complete only one semester of freshman composition). In addition, the letter would provide information on extracurricular activities of interest to the student and, if necessary, inform him or her of academic programs of special interest (e.g., Honors or Developmental Studies).

Although the development of the computer software for such a project might seem to be an impossible task, other universities, such as the University of Iowa, are engaged in such programs already. Before this project is undertaken, it will be desirable to contact these universities to determine the success of their efforts.

In addition to the development of computer software, it will also be necessary to prepare text materials for the letters themselves. Since this project will undoubtedly be complex and involve many units of the University, it should be developed for piecemeal implementation if at all possible. For example, it would be desirable to have operational by the spring of 1977 the capability of responses to students based on their ACT standard scores and selected major. Within a year the entire project should be accomplished.

So that this project may be begun immediately, it is proposed that two graduate assistants be employed in the offices of the Freshman Year Coordinators. One graduate assistant would be charged with the development of computer software while the other would be responsible for the preparation of text material.

2) A booklet or brochure which contains more descriptive information on freshman level General Studies courses than is to be found in the General Catalog. This publication would contain information on the course content, the requirements and expectations of each course, the method of instruction and grading, and class size. A slight expansion of the booklet would permit the inclusion of a section on special academic opportunities for freshmen.

If a successful program of pre-advising conference advisement is developed, it will necessitate changes in both the philosophy and practice of the summer advising program. Students will be prepared to discuss their academic and career plans and will not likely be satisfied with a "schedule-building" activity. Summer advisors will need more thorough training if they are to meet the needs of such students, as noted elsewhere.

If these changes occur, the need for close communication between the summer advisor and the student's permanent academic advisor will be even more acute than at present. By the time a student sees the permanent advisor, he or she should be deep into the process of academic planning. It will be necessary for the permanent advisor to be knowledgeable of plans and agreements made between the student and summer advisor. Since academic advising is rightfully the responsibility of the academic colleges, we urge each college to give particular attention to this transition from summer to permanent advisor.

As the expectations of students for assistance in academic planning grow, it will be necessary for the University and the colleges to define the role of academic advisor more precisely. It is not reasonable to expect that every faculty member will become skilled in the techniques of academic and career planning.

Assistance in this task of redefinition will be provided by the proposed coordinators of the freshman year (see section 8, this chapter).

Members of the Commission have considered the desirability and feasibility of organizing a new center for career counseling and information, making use of existing services and adding those necessary to provide a comprehensive program. Such a goal is probably very desirable and deserves to be kept in mind, although it should be seen as a long-range possibility and not a proposal for the present. Such a center should be reconsidered at a later time as resources permit, as precise needs become identified, and as outlines of a workable structure become clarified.

As recommended by the Task Group in Academic Courses and Content, it is proposed that a series of seminars on academic and career planning be developed for freshmen and other students. The College of Arts and Sciences has recently moved to establish such a program for its large group of "undecided" students and other colleges provide some assistance in this area through "orientation to the profession" courses. More concerted effort is needed, however, and the responsibility for developing a University-wide series should rest with the freshman coordinators.

There is a clear need for a single office on the campus to

serve as a "resource broker" for students. Such an office might also provide some direct services but would have the primary responsibility of directing students to units which are equipped to deal with problems of all types. Of necessity, such an office would be centrally located, be staffed on a full-time basis, and be capable of gathering, indexing, and disseminating information from a variety of sources. While this function might be performed within the office of the coordinators of the freshman year, a more logical choice would be the Academic Information Development Service in the M.I. King Library.

4. Academic Programs and Course Content

Presumably the heart of the University experience for freshmen is found in its academic programs. Every other purpose of the University is related in some fashion to learning, and the organized expression of this comprehensive mission is the courses we teach. The importance of the messages imparted by the form and content of our first courses cannot be underrated. On the one hand we should convey to students that the kinds of work and approaches used in college-level studies are different from those typically employed in secondary school. In some instances, departmental faculties are familiar enough with secondary school curriculum content to know how to articulate beginning

University courses with what has taken place in high school. In most cases, however, less is known than should be, a situation which leads the Commission to recommend that these departments make concerted efforts to determine the nature of curricula at the secondary school level in their respective subject areas, and to make more conscious efforts to articulate freshman offerings with these curricula.

We need as a faculty to open up new questions and new areas of study to students in this critical year, where, from their point of view, there is more than merely a symbolic break with past learning patterns. For one example, we need to guide student thinking through issues surrounding the meaning of work, in some of the ways discussed in the May, 1976 Deans' Meeting on "Careers and the Purposes of the University".

On the other hand, the positive features of "standard" freshman course offerings could be enhanced significantly if a distinction were maintained more uniformly between pre-major courses and general education courses. It is therefore recommended that departments currently involved in freshman instruction carefully review the present goals of freshmen offerings to ascertain whether the need and the opportunity exists to reconstruct certain courses to meet freshman general education objectives appropriate for a given subject area. It is further recom-

mended that the General Studies Committee proceed in requesting information from each department currently contributing to the General Studies Program, inquiring as to instructional objectives and syllabi, with the intent of assessing each course (or course selection) in view of overall objectives drawn up by the Committee for each General Studies Area. A report of findings should be made to the Undergraduate Council in spring, 1977, for a decision on appropriate means of dissemination.

It is also recommended that the General Studies Committee and the Undergraduate Council inform departments in the Division of Colleges of their interest in seeing more proposals for new courses at the freshman level which are in accord with general education objectives. Both the Committee and the Council should give higher priority to the generation of such new course proposals, and should exercise greater initiative in approaching departments with ideas and suggestions for such freshman offerings. Because there is considerable instructional talent and subject matter appropriate to a general education outside the College of Arts and Sciences, such proposals are to be sought from departments outside as well as inside that college.

Because coherence and integration are so frequently lacking in the interrelationships among courses in the General Studies Program, any effort to achieve continuity and interplay is to be

applauded. The Commission recognizes and endorses, therefore, the plans developing in the Division of Basic Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences to attempt "coordinated freshman instruction" with the assistance of several faculty members.

In addition to seeking changes in the standard course offerings available to freshmen, a program of freshman seminars should be planned and implemented under the general guidance of the freshman year coordinator in the Division of Colleges. This new program of seminars would function very much as suggested by Task Group C, and should be designed to achieve the objectives outlined in their report. The Commission recommends that freshman seminars be instituted as soon as feasible after a Planning Committee appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs can report a usable plan. The planning should be carried out within these general guidelines:

1. The seminars should be transdisciplinary whenever possible; they should emphasize common reading or other learning experience, and shared responsibility for discussion; they should emphasize independent study.

2. The seminars should involve both recurring and variable topics. Topics may well change as faculty teaching in the seminars change, as in the North Carolina and Stanford seminar programs.

3. Selection of faculty is important, not only with regard to quality, but breadth as well. Faculty should be involved from many colleges and departments, always keeping in mind the general (i.e., non-profes-

sional) education aims of the freshman experience as a whole.

4. While it would be desirable generally for seminar faculty to function as academic advisors, it is not feasible to require such a relationship. The development of advisory relationships in seminar contexts is to be encouraged, however.

5. Experimentation is encouraged with "add-on" one-hour seminars supplementary to regular lecture courses. Such opportunities will provide freshmen chances to discuss lecture and related material in small settings with subgroups of classmates, in seminars for which they would register in advance.

6. The initial number of freshman seminars should be relatively small and should gradually increase as experience, interest, and feasibility warrant.

The decisions (or indecision) of freshmen regarding academic programs are made within the larger contexts of career and life planning. While it is of utmost importance that such planning not cause students to reach premature closure, it is of even greater importance that the processes of exploration, information seeking, and weighing of alternatives be stimulated and supported at an early point in the new student's academic career. Therefore, the Commission recommends that in addition to the freshman seminar program proposed above, seminars in career/academic exploration and planning be developed at the freshman level, probably not for credit, and with major responsibility for overseeing development assigned to the Student Affairs coordinator for the freshman year. Such planning should take cognizance

of the commendable efforts already expended by the Basic Studies Division of the College of Arts and Sciences on related activities involving the Placement Service.

The objective of freshman seminars is not to convert the University into a liberal arts college. Indeed, many students prefer the anonymity which attends size, and many learn well in impersonal settings, as considerable research testifies. We believe, however, the attainment of many of the freshman year objectives will be enhanced for many students when they are provided the seminar option. The chances for close interaction over subject matter, for discussion and debate, for trying out ideas, for challenge and response, for intellectual exhilaration, for exciting the motive to learn, all seem somewhat greater in such a format. In short, stress is placed in these recommendations on achieving the kind of student-student and student-faculty interaction which enhances intellectual motivation and autonomy among freshmen, in the belief that what is invested in this first year will pay the individual and the University handsome dividends in succeeding years. Properly organized, a university such as ours should be able to take advantage simultaneously of the comprehensiveness which accompanies large size and of the individualization which is associated with small size.

For these same reasons, the Commission recommends that opportunities for expanded academic programming in residence halls be sought by student life, housing, and academic staff. As noted specifically in another section, it is proposed that: 1) The number of residence hall courses offered should gradually be increased, with coordination continuing to be the shared responsibility of staff in the Dean of Undergraduate Studies office and that of the Dean for Residence Hall Programming; 2) A planning committee should be appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to work out details for implementing a residential learning experiment such as proposed by the informal College Impact Seminar (see Appendix 4), to be initiated for the fall of 1977.

It was noted earlier that a number of the colleges and departments make active efforts to secure the teaching services of the most qualified instructors for assignments to the freshman level. The Commission urges that chairmen and deans continue to give attention to selection of the most capable instructors. In addition, in view of the possible decline in numbers of graduate students in certain fields, the College of Arts and Sciences is encouraged to take the initiative in assessing the likely future of graduate student participation in the teaching program of the University, remaining cognizant that other colleges also use

this model of graduate training and undergraduate teaching. Also in this connection, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies is asked to update on a University-wide basis information about current departmental and college efforts to select, train, and supervise graduate teaching assistants, a survey task which has not been carried out for five years or so.

Likewise, in view of the apparent minimum effort currently directed to explicit instruction in pedagogy for graduate teaching assistants, the Commission recommends that the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, in concert with the Dean of the Graduate School, see that resources in the College of Education and in the various departments are explored and that one or more courses are designed to offer instruction in teaching at the university level. Any such course should either meet standards for graduate credit or be acceptable as part of the graduate teaching assistant's normal load.

Academic programs at the University require proper support to constantly improve both teaching and learning, whether at the freshman level or some other. To these ends, the Commission encourages the further development of educational resource centers. This statement is intended to include student-centered learning-improvement programs such as the Developmental Studies Program and the Academic Information-Developmental Studies program

located in the M.I. King Library, and faculty-centered teaching-improvement programs such as that incorporated in the newly-reorganized Office of Instructional Resources. The continued development and evaluation of these programs is encouraged. In the case of such programs, however, just as in the case of services and activities for faculty and students in general, greater effort must be made to publicize their nature and availability.

As resources warrant, learning centers such as those described in a recent request forwarded to the National Science Foundation's Comprehensive Assistance to Undergraduate Science Education program should also be developed with the objective in mind of improving freshman learning opportunities. Such facilities would permit more "hands-on" experience with research equipment, more experience with computer applications to data handling and problem-solving, more opportunities for use of modularized learning packages, and expanded capabilities for some of the newer individualized and technology-based learning systems.

Because the values and objectives underlying course and curricular requirements are unclear to many freshmen, with the consequence that they are misunderstood or judged to be arbitrary

and capricious, it is important to find more ways to communicate the explicit values on which the University education is based. Though frequently dismissed as archaic truisms and embarrassingly trite sentimentalities, the virtues of the university education of which our bulletins boast do remind students and staff of our purposes. Such values and objectives need to be articulated in both "archaic" and contemporary forms and presented repeatedly to the University community - at the Summer Advising Conference, at recruitment time, at times of registration, etc. It is recommended, therefore, that the General Studies Committee draft a succinct statement of philisophic justification for the University General Studies Program suitable for dissemination to prospective and entering freshmen. (The Committee might wish to refer to the last such effort, sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences, and drafted by a committee chaired by Dr. Fletcher Gabbard, in 1971, or the original effort contained in the document "Beginning a Second Century".)

Such a statement should consider both the recent thinking inherent in ideas such as "civic literacy", the relationship between learning and work, the role of education in moral development, and the like, as well as the originating impulses in the general education movement. Any justification for general study

must speak to our students in this time as well as to all students for all time.

It is also hoped that colleges and departments involved in teaching first-year courses will give fresh thought to the purposes of such instruction and as a result give more explicit attention to the task of sharing with freshman students their reasons for being. In fact, the statements made by the University as a whole (e.g., through the General Studies Committee) will be no better than the quality of thought given to instruction by individual faculty.

5. Residential Life

In view of the importance of the quality of residence hall life in the total climate of the campus, a number of recommendations are presented in this section which bear on means by which residence hall programming should attempt to be more supportive of freshman year objectives. One of the central themes of these proposals is that interaction and mutual programming efforts between the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs should increase. Any such team efforts, moreover, should include personnel from the Division of Business Affairs as well, in view of the importance of their financial support as well as their active interest in such projects.

In an attempt to decrease the separation between residence hall life and classroom life, it is recommended that means be sought to encourage increased faculty and staff visits to residence halls. One aim is to bring more faculty onto the home turf of students, to interact with them in settings where students' needs, intellectual concerns, and developmental levels are more likely to be understood. Another aim, of course, is to offer students whatever benefits might accrue from closer, out-of-class interaction with faculty. It is well understood that creative and effective programming in residential settings involving faculty and staff is difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, it is possible to do a better job, and those responsible are therefore being asked to take a new look, to search for new ideas, new formats, new strategies for achieving greater student-faculty-staff interaction in residence halls, and to concentrate their energies especially on freshman residence halls.

As a part of this re-emphasis effort, it is recommended that resource persons for use in residence hall programming include not only faculty and staff persons, but community-based and campus-related individuals, including campus ministers as well. Also following the Task Group's lead, the Commission hopes that program efforts can encompass the general area of value clarifi-

cation and development, for example, by promoting discussion of moral and ethical issues.

Residence hall programming has been facilitated through support for mini-libraries and audio-visual equipment. It is recommended that residence hall staff continue to monitor such needs, and to make requests of appropriate offices where such acquisitions and services are seen as essential to the support of program functions described in this report.

As noted elsewhere, regular University credit courses have been taught in residence halls on a limited and experimental basis for almost five years. It is recommended, on the basis of the success of such courses to date, that the number of such courses be gradually increased, and that the expansion take place primarily in freshman residence halls. Responsibility for coordinating residence hall courses should continue to rest with the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Associate Dean of Students for Residence Halls Programming.

To date, the residence hall courses have been comprised entirely of regular University course offerings. Quite frequently, such offerings have met the academic needs and interests of students in given halls. On the other hand, there may well be room for a different type of course altogether; that is, a type which would be variable credit, variable in subject, initiated

and proposed by students themselves in accordance with their interests and needs. Such courses could be proposed directly to faculty members known to students, or through the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, a college dean's office, or a departmental office. If agreed to by the faculty member and his/her chairman, siting and registration for the course would be coordinated with the Office of Residence Hall Programming and the Office of the Registrar in the same fashion as other residence hall courses. The Commission proposes that a small implementation group be formed to promote student initiation and such courses in the 1976-77 year. Again, priority should be given to freshman residence halls.

(These recommendations assume that freshman residence halls will continue in existence. In the future, if a decision is made to mix assignments to given halls, then the opportunity to program specifically for this group through residence halls is lessened. At such time as it may be needed, the whole question of how to use residence hall environments and events to support freshman year objectives should be raised anew.)

The Commission has elsewhere expressed endorsement in principle of a proposal for a residential learning experiment originating in an informal faculty-staff seminar during the past year (the proposal is included as Appendix H). While the proposal arose

independently of the Commission's activities, its objectives are quite consistent with the intent of the Commission concerning residence hall programming.

The Commission is aware of the fact that many freshmen do not live in residence halls. Beyond that fact, not much is known about the characteristics of non-residents or their needs. It is highly probable that the needs of such students are different in some important ways from those of resident students, judging from national research findings. At this point, however, the Commission can only propose that the needs of non-resident freshmen be surveyed so that appropriate recommendations for action can be formulated. Such a survey should be the responsibility of the Division of Student Affairs.

6. Cultural Enrichment and Recreational Programming

Originally considered within the scope of the charge to the Task Group on Campus Climate, but overlapping with other areas of concern as well, the proposals in this section deal with the general category of special events, cultural and enrichment programs, and campus recreation programs having impact on freshmen.

A matter which aroused some concern among members of the Task Group on Campus Climate was the underutilization of certain

physical locations on the campus, both indoor and outdoor, which could be used as sites for events and activicies promoting a climate of greater intellectuality and creativity. To its credit, the University has in the past two years made use of the King Library area for indoor and outdoor miniature concerts which have been extremely well received. Likewise, the Department of Theatre Arts and the School of Music should be applauded for their efforts to elevate the commonplace by bringing the performing arts into natural campus settings in the daylight hours. The Commission wishes strongly to encourage more efforts such as these, for the benefits they bring not only freshmen but the entire campus community. Special, unexpected events such as these truly make a university campus a place apart, and they cannot fail to mark the uniqueness of the campus in the minds of new students.

Only part of the problem is underutilization, however. Particularly regarding indoor space for events and activities which might draw students, faculty, and staff together around common interests, there is such a scarcity of it that programming it for interest-related activities frequently receives a low priority listing. In this regard, while no recommendation for action seems feasible at this time, it does seem desirable to call attention again to the inadequacy of present Student Center

facilities for many desirable programs supporting enrichment of student life, including freshmen.

In addition, in view of the need to promote more interaction around academic interests, the need for additional spaces in and adjacent to departments is noted. It is difficult for undergraduate organizations and activities related to departments to feel much sense of identity without a sense of place. (While most such organizations are not comprised primarily of freshman students, their activities and their very existence convey important messages to new students about the interest of departments in students generally and in them individually. The involvement of students in departmental programs can also be important to advising and curricular change processes affecting freshmen.)

The Commission has observed elsewhere that freshmen appear to find it difficult to obtain information about programs and events in which they may be interested. While some of this problem can be attributed to mere inattentiveness, it remains true that the University must do what it can to discharge its responsibilities to inform the campus community and coordinate events to the extent possible. The Commission therefore recommends that every effort be made to improve the coordination and information dissemination of cultural affairs programming. While

the two units most capable of taking responsibility for improvement in this area are the Student Center and the University Information Service, consideration should be given to use of the facilities of WBKY-FM for creation of periodic "bulletin board" announcements which would make freshmen and other students more aware of special events and activities. Special preview programs of upcoming events might also be considered for production and airing by WBKY-FM. The Commission recommends that the appropriate administrators investigate such possibilities. Consideration should also be given to a student-oriented publication of upcoming events such as the one now published for the general public and the campus by the University Information Service in the form of "April (or whatever month) at UK". The Commission also urges The Kentucky Kernel to expand its preview of upcoming events.

The Commission wishes to endorse the proposed expansion of Seaton Center, which will permit increased opportunities for recreational programming for freshmen and other students. Likewise, the planned astronomy facilities for instruction and public service in the Chemistry-Physics addition will permit more adequate lower division instruction in this presently underdeveloped discipline, and will make a valuable contribution to the campus atmosphere.

7. Research on Freshmen

It is clear from a variety of sources that efforts to identify both research needs and research and dissemination capabilities are scattered and underdeveloped. It is recommended therefore that cooperative support from both the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs be committed to:

1) The identification of research needs. For example, what are the felt needs of freshman students at different times (from year to year)? What are withdrawing students like and what are their special needs? What are the characteristics - ability level, values, career and major interests - of entering students from year to year?

2) The design and execution of more studies dealing with freshmen and the freshman experience. Leadership in these tasks should rest with the Student Characteristics Unit in the Division of Student Affairs. Exploration of the possibility of a periodic student (including freshmen) poll should be explored by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Student Characteristics Unit. Means of enhancing the response of students to the ACE Institutional Survey of freshmen should also be sought.

8. Coordination and Oversight Responsibilities

No problem has been mentioned with greater frequency during the lifetime of the Commission than the low level of coordination among parts of an organization which presumes to operate as a single system. Each of the four Task Groups made it clear that high priority should be given to the solution of this problem.

In each case, the solution recommended was the same: create some kind of administrative device, a single point of coordination and information, an office with explicit responsibilities for continuous oversight of programs and activities having impact on the freshman experience, the operating philosophy of which should be creative, aggressive diplomacy.

The response of the Commission is to propose that two offices, one in the Division of Academic Affairs, one in the Division of Student Affairs, be assigned the responsibility of overseeing and coordinating efforts to improve the general quality of the freshman year experience. As resources permit, and the demands justify, this suggests the creation of new positions. In the case of the Division of Academic Affairs, this assignment and, ultimately, the new position, will logically be located in the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. In the case of the Division of Student Affairs, this function would best be housed in the Office of the Vice President. The dual coordinating roles seem justified when the diversity and complexity of tasks and the variety of program responsibilities entailed in the totality of the freshman experience.

The functions to be served by these offices will include the following (the division of responsibilities is indicated in parentheses):

1) Insuring provision of adequate and accurate and timely information on housing, financial aid, and health insurance. (Student Affairs)

2) Coordinating development of ACT-based advising improvements and other identified means of upgrading advising among freshmen. (Academic Affairs)

3) Receiving and answering or referring questions from freshmen (or prospective freshmen) concerning the University so that there are fewer initial points of reference from the point of view of students. (Student Affairs, Academic Affairs)

4) Providing of leadership in program development to improve freshman year academic experiences. This responsibility would include, for example, overseeing the design and implementation of freshman seminars (Academic Affairs), and overseeing planning and implementation of any residential learning experiment. (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs)

5) Providing of staff oversight to policy, planning, and decision-making in connection with the operation of the Summer Advising Conference, taking major responsibility for determination and recommendation of desirable improvements in the program, and overseeing implementation and evaluation of an experimental two-day Summer Advising Conference. (Student Affairs, Academic Affairs)

6) Providing of analysis and recommendations on the nature of printed materials sent to prospective and admitted freshmen. (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs)

7) Conducting and assembling findings from ongoing studies on UK freshmen. (Student Affairs, Academic Affairs)

8) Providing continuing analysis and recommendations on freshman recruitment policies and procedures, including for example, recruitment of minority students and superior students, the use of alumni in recruiting, and the need to maintain or alter the long-standing low-key recruiting policy of the institution. (Academic Affairs)

9) Investigating various existing programs of academic advising and information services for freshmen and recommend improvements where needed. (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs)

10) Continuing inquiry into operating programs both on and off campus which have been designed to cope with problems of the freshman year, and disseminating findings from such inquiry to individuals and units on campus who could learn profitably from working examples. (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs)

It is further proposed that the Steering Group of the Freshman Year Commission become a standing "Freshman Year Administrative Group", expanded to include occupants of the coordinating roles described above, whose function will be continuing joint administrative oversight of freshman year improvement efforts. The Commission also recommends that a standing faculty-staff-student advisory group on the freshman year be appointed by the coordinators to advise them on problems and proposed improvements in the freshman year experience.

Chapter IV. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The subject matter of this report is at once vast, elusive, and changing. It is vast in the sense that hardly anything exists in a university that does not contribute at least indirectly to the experience of freshmen. It is elusive in that we do not always understand the effects of the elements of university systems on the freshman experience and therefore can know neither all the problems nor their solutions with great confidence. The experiences of freshmen themselves change as personnel, students, programs, and parts of the societal environment change.

The report is offered, therefore, with a proper appreciation of its limitations. It may appear to suffer from a lack of inclusiveness, too much of a sense of tentativeness in its conclusions, and too timid a set of recommended solutions. On the other hand, the report represents the University's first attempt to grapple with a complex set of circumstances and their impacts viewed uniquely from the standpoint of the experience of freshmen. It is intended to assay the present to determine where we are now, and to guide

some next steps toward the future. The tasks of study and action for improvement obviously do not stop here; the future will, it is hoped, bring more studies, more recommendations, and more changes.

This report, and the efforts which it represents, should be interpreted as an expression on the part of both the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs of continuing concern for the educational welfare of beginning students. In this study we have found areas where there are ongoing programs that are outstanding in their benefits to entering students, and indeed we do not consider the overall situation in any way critical. However, we have also found that for many students this is an uncoordinated experience, sometimes contradictory in nature and more intellectually barren than need be. While the details of all the recommended actions are not imbedded in concrete, the situation does require a degree of commitment from the entire University community if we are to make substantial improvements in the quality of that experience. Certain of the recommendations will be seen as clearly more important and feasible than others, and these proposals particularly should be pushed toward implementation as soon as possible.

The commitment of the University to improving the experience

of University students in their critical beginning year might well begin with the adoption of a set of goals for the freshman year by an appropriate and representative body such as the University Senate. The Commission has attempted to formulate such goals (see Chapter I) and offers them for consideration. While the necessary tasks cannot be accomplished by the mere endorsement of words and phrases, we believe that our efforts must move forward from a base of widely shared aims and understandings.